

PROCEEDINGS
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A REPLACEMENT NAME FOR *BOTHROPS*
LANSBERGII VENEZUELENSIS ROZE,
1959 (VIPERIDAE, SERPENTES)

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Hoge (1966) published a list of "all recognized species" of *Bothrops*, in which two distinct taxa carried the trivial name "*venezuelensis*." This resulted from the difficulty in determining which of the two was the earlier name. This problem has now been resolved.

In 1952 Sandner described *Bothrops venezuelensis* from the Serranía de El Avila, Federal District, Venezuela. The description (published in a Colombian journal which is extremely difficult to obtain) currently is available in the United States only in xerox copies. Apparently copies of this description were not distributed widely enough to bring it to the attention of other herpetologists until 1961. Certainly it was not seen by Roze in 1959, when he described *Bothrops lansbergii venezuelensis* from Caripito, Monagas, Venezuela, or he would not have used the primary homonym. In 1961, Sandner and Römer described *Bothrops pifanoi*, also from "Serranía de El Avila El Papelón," in a paper dated December 18, 1961, and Sandner described *Bothrops venezuelae*, again from "Serranía de El Avila," in a paper dated December 20, 1961. These two papers are mentioned in the review of Venezuelan snakes by Roze (1966) in a footnote on p. 272, but as I have pointed out (Peters, 1967), Roze did not have an opportunity to change his text materially after about 1959. Sandner (1966) reviewed the three nominal species *venezuelensis* Sandner, 1952; *pifanoi* Sandner and Römer, 1961; and *venezuelae* Sandner, 1961. He concluded that only one valid species is involved, and that it

should be known as *Bothrops venezuelae* Sandner, 1961. In this review, he also attempted to justify using *venezuelae* as a replacement name for *venezuelensis*, and to prove that *venezuelae* and *pifanoi* were published simultaneously. He used Article 33 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature as the basis for the change from *venezuelensis* to *venezuelae*, arguing that these are identical names, having the same stem, "venezuel—," with the change in the suffix considered a "justified emendation" in the sense of Article 33. The article in question, however, limits justified emendations to the "correction of an incorrect original spelling." Although Sandner felt that his earlier name "*venezuelensis*" was unsatisfactory, and wished to change it to "*venezuelae*," it is clear that the original name was correctly formed, and correctly spelled, in accord with Recommendation IV of Appendix D of the Code. Sandner's proposed change must be rejected, and the name of the taxon must stand as *Bothrops venezuelensis* Sandner, 1952, which seems to fulfill the criteria of the Code for publication and availability, even though no library known to me received copies before 1961. Following Sandner, 1966, the names *Bothrops pifanoi* Sandner and Römer, 1961, and *Bothrops venezuelae* Sandner, 1961, are synonyms of this taxon.

Because the name *Bothrops lansbergii venezuelensis* Roze, is a primary homonym of *Bothrops venezuelensis* Sandner, I asked Dr. Roze to publish a new name for his subspecies. He responded by asking me to review the whole problem. I am pleased, therefore, to have an opportunity to continue the association of his name with a subspecies from the country whose reptile fauna he has studied so carefully, and I shall call it:

***Bothrops lansbergii rozei* nomen novum**

Bothrops lansbergii venezuelensis Roze, 1959, p. 11. Type-locality: Caripito, Monagas, Venezuela, 50 m. (Holotype: Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. 59489.) Preoccupied by *Bothrops venezuelensis* Sandner Montilla, 1952.

Bothrops lansbergii venezuelensis—Hoge, 1965 (1966): p. 123.

Bothrops lansbergii venezuelensis—Roze, 1966: p. 278 (q.v. for earlier synonymy).

Distribution: Drier coastal areas of Venezuela from Monagas State to Zulia State, according to Roze, 1966.

Still another nominal subspecies should be mentioned here. In 1934, Briceño described *Bothrops Neuvoiedii Venezuelenzi*, based upon a series of specimens from the Río de Oro region, Venezuela. This taxon has been synonymized with *Bothrops atrox atrox* by Roze, 1966. Both the specific and the subspecific name were obviously misspelled. The species was meant to be "*neuwiedi*," and for the subspecies the author intended to use the adjective formed from the geographical name plus the ending *-ensis*. Since, however, no corrected spelling appeared in the original paper, and no errata were published later, it seems legitimate to accept the spelling as published. The name does not assume priority over the two more recent uses of the epithet *venezuelensis* by Sandner or Roze, because it differs in two letters, and the Code (1964, Art. 57d) states that ". . . the difference of a single letter is sufficient to prevent homonymy." It can remain in the synonymy of *Bothrops atrox atrox*, or be revived by a later author, without effecting the other similarly spelled names.

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